



A Cup Of Ideas

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The goal of our newsletter is to help our clients grow their business. Promotional products can increase awareness, name recognition and lead generation. Awards and premiums will improve customer loyalty, employee morale and productivity.

Winter/Spring 2010

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ROUTETO:

Promotional Times™

Information and Ideas for Improving Sales, Image and Profits



Loyalty Programs Take Off

A recent study shows that the recession has led to a boom in one area: loyalty programs. Participation in loyalty programs in the U.S. is up 19% from 2007, according to the latest market research.

When they are executed well, loyalty programs can be powerful customer retention tools. It takes careful planning to stand out in the crowd, since the average household is enrolled in 14 loyalty programs.

Whether you currently have a loyalty program or are considering starting one, here are some tips to help get your customers engaged — and coming back for more:

Define your membership. Determine which customers you want to reward and which rewards will motivate them. One beer company allows its loyalty program members to earn points redeemable for merchandise such as imprinted mini grills, bar stools and dartboards, while a high-end retailer offers watches, electronics and outerwear.

Decide how you will reward customers. You can reward customers for making purchases, reaching certain milestones, referring a friend, or providing an e-mail address or other important data. Or, you can choose to surprise participants by periodically sending exclusive items.

Start off right. Create a welcome kit with a simple explanation of how the program works. Include a few useful, high-visibility items imprinted with your company name and the name of the program - such as a notepad, pen, key tag, magnet, mousepad or calendar.

Remember that the goal is to grow your business and retain key customers by making them feel special. We can help you review your existing loyalty program or start a new one. Just give us a call today!





Benefits of Employee Recognition

A 2009 study affirms what many managers already know: employee recognition programs can result in a significant improvement in employee performance. The study reports that companies with a goal of improving employee morale outperform their competitors financially.

According to the research, effective recognition programs include the following elements:

■ **A focus on increasing employee morale.**

Successful recognition programs motivate in ways that increase worker's engagement with their position and employer.

■ **Rewards linked to specific goals.**

The study found that the most effective rewards were given for behaviors tied to specific performance goals, with an emphasis on increased quality of performance. These goals should be connected to the company's business objectives, mission and values.

■ **A wide variety of rewards.**

What motivates one employee may not work for another. The study also found that rewards don't need to be expensive and that non-cash rewards typically get the best results. Consider awards, plaques, trophies, and gifts that each individual will value, such as an imprinted backpack or binoculars for an outdoor enthusiast, a vase or bar set for someone who enjoys entertaining, or a stylish custom scarf or tie for a fashionable type.

Employee recognition is especially important during a time of salary and benefit freezes. Plus, an effective program can help you retain your best employees after the job market improves.

We can help you create an employee recognition program or strengthen your current program. Contact us to learn more.



Create a Successful Sampling Program

Free samples are a great way to build brand awareness and goodwill. Maximize the impact by giving recipients a way to remember your brand long after the sample is gone.

An ice-cream shop offering free tastes, for example, could also give out logo'd ice cream scoops or reusable bowls. A sandwich shop could offer its free samples in an imprinted insulated lunch bag, and a wine shop could hand out customized wine stoppers at a wine tasting.

This strategy even works for companies providing services or products that are hard to sample. Just choose an item that relates to what your company provides. One high-tech company, for example, built awareness of its services by offering commuters free copies of a business newspaper it advertises in, along with coffee in branded thermal mugs.

Need more ideas? Give us a call today!



Lagniappe

[a little something extra]

Quotable Quotes

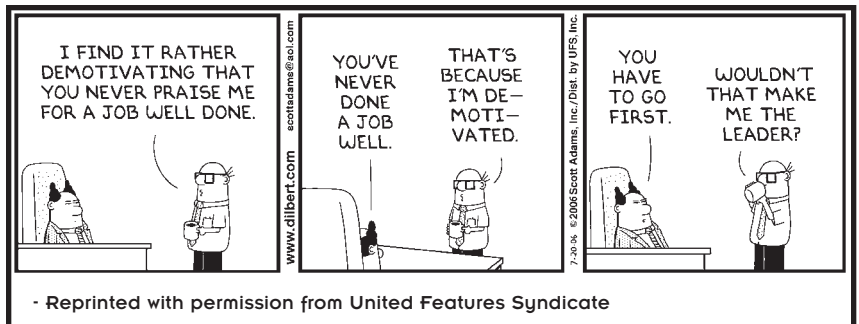
The time is always right to do what is right.
– Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

The best thing about the future is that it comes only one day at a time. – Abraham Lincoln

People who say it cannot be done should not interrupt those who are doing it. – Chinese proverb

My dog is worried about the economy because Alpo is up to \$3.00 a can. That's almost \$21.00 in dog money! – Joe Weinstein

The less you talk, the more you're listened to.
– Abigail Van Buren





Health & Wellness Items

Cold and flu season is well underway, and allergy season is right around the corner. Here are some ideas to help keep your employees and clients healthy and happy:

Care Package – When you're sick, you don't feel like running to the store. Your employees and customers will thank you for this cold and flu care package, which includes instant soup, herbal tea, hand-sanitizing wipes, tissues, cough drops and more. Also great for health clinics, doctors offices and college bookstores.

A Magnetic Idea – Inspire healthy living with a magnet featuring tips and ideas for exercise and reducing stress. Versions with tips on cold and flu prevention, smoking cessation, blood pressure and more are also available.

Take a Deep Breath – This air ionizer helps keep the air clean and fresh. It's perfect for home or office and makes a great thank-you gift.



New and Unique Products

Check out these interesting promotional ideas:

Spotless Reputation – No more ink stains! This pen can only be clipped to a pocket or other surface when the point is retracted, preventing leaks. Makes a great sales leave-behind or tradeshow giveaway.



Be Prepared – Your busy clients, sales force and anyone on the go would appreciate this handy USB drive. It features a screwdriver, blade, scissors, key ring flashlight and ballpoint pen. It is also available in a bladeless airline-friendly version.



Pocket Pics – This mini digital keychain camera allows anyone to capture memories on the go. Functions as a still camera, video camera and web cam, and includes a USB cable and carrying case. It's perfect for wedding favors, travel agents, cruise ships, airlines, tradeshow and more.



Recycle This

One vodka company took its commitment to the environment a step further and began shipping its product in imprinted, reusable blue recycling bins. In addition to eliminating the waste of empty shipping boxes, the step encourages customers to be eco-friendly while reminding them of the vodka brand whenever they use the bins at home or the office.



There are a wide range of green packaging and presentation items available for your products and promotions. This includes boxes, binders, mailers and folders made from recycled paper; recyclable and compostable biodegradable polypropylene; or even plantable seeded paper.

We can help you be an environmental leader. Contact us for packaging ideas and details!



The Riddler

YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A FREE GIFT

Q: Here on Earth, tomorrow always follows today but there is a place where yesterday follows today where is it?

Note: The first five people to correctly answer the riddle will win a free gift. Email, call or fax your answer (see form on back). Answer to last issue's riddle: "Lounge"



Words to the Wise

From Larry the Cable Guy

1. A day without sunshine is like night.
2. On the other hand, you have different fingers.
3. 42.7 percent of all statistics are made up on the spot.
4. Remember, half the people you know are below average.
5. He who laughs last, thinks slowest.
6. Depression is merely anger without enthusiasm.
7. The early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese in the trap.
8. Support bacteria. They're the only culture most people have.

Dear Addy,

ANSWERS TO YOUR PROMOTIONAL QUESTIONS

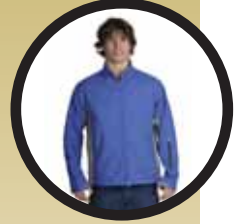
Q: Our bike shop needs a way to remind customers to come in for a spring tune-up. Any suggestions?

A: Send a postcard or letter offering a free gift when customers bring their bike in. Offer everyone a logo'd T-shirt, insulated water bottle or a massager to ease post-ride aches. Then hold a drawing for larger items such as imprinted pulse-rate watches, windbreakers, duffle bags and sports pants.

Q: We're planning a sales contest for our reps and are looking for prizes in a range of price points. Can you help?

A: How about some convenient items that would make their jobs and lives easier? Cell phone charging stations, glove compartment organizers, digital memo recorders, wheeled computer bags and luggage sets would all be excellent motivators.

NEED HELP? SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS.



----- Please copy and fax or mail your request -----

**Do you enjoy reading our newsletter?
Call, fax or email us with your comments.**

This Newsletter Provides Information and Ideas for Improving Sales, Image and Profits.

Want to make your next promotion a success?
Please contact us at:

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ccrogers@stargate.net
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I'm interested in:

- Lead Generators Employee Motivation
- Green Promotions Apparel
- Tradeshow Giveaways Winter/Spring Promotions
- Incentives/Awards New Products

I need: literature pricing samples of these products: _____

Contact _____

Company _____

Address (if different from addressee) _____

Phone/Fax/Email _____

Riddle Answer _____



17" Jumbo Auto Display Balloon Wholesaler
Prices Low As \$10.00!! Per/Bag (72) CT
Balloons Made In The U.S.A.